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## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Themis. A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion.* By JANE ELLEN HARRISON. Cambridge: University Press, 1912. Pp. xxxii+559. \$5.

The primitives are upon us. In literature we must be mediaevalists; in art we may not truly admire anything that is not glorified by an inarticulate helplessness; and in religion we turn from the perfected rites and reasoned faith of highly civilized peoples to track out the remotest strivings of rude man to express his religious emotions, feeling confident that if we can only detect the primitive's first affections we shall have firm hold on the essential elements in religion. All this is very natural and in many ways highly desirable. Yet are we quite confident that the primitive stages are absolutely illuminating? Because we, with our historical telescope, can detect the source from which a certain religious act of the fifth century B.C. or of our own day sprang, does it follow that we therefore grasp the full religious meaning of that act? Would a knowledge of the origins of the several rites which compose the Mass convey to us any adequate understanding of the religious content which the Mass has for the devout mind? Certainly not. Although it is true that we cannot understand any stage of any thing without knowing whence it came, origins can never tell us the whole story of the developed state. Yet it is a fact that anthropology has widened our horizon enormously and has already rendered great assistance to the study of religion. In England and in France there have grown up anthropological schools whose stout volumes display great stores of material drawn from the remotest quarters of the world. These works have thrown welcome light into many dark places, and the writer for one gladly acknowledges his debt to the learned and prolific members of these schools. Still often one cannot refrain from asking certain questions. Although similar rites are frequently developed at like stages of culture among peoples widely separated by space and time, can we be sure that these rites represent concepts or impulses so uniform that we are justified in using matter drawn from Australia, Mexico, or Kamchatka to fill out the gaps in our evidence and to interpret our data, when we are dealing, say, with the religions of Greece and Rome? Control is not easy and, with all respect be it said, the "comparative" writers do not always seem to apply it rigidly. The collecting of interesting material appears somehow or other to blunt the logical faculties.

This diatribe is prompted by Miss Harrison's learned, interesting, and persuasive book. The work owes its origin, as Miss Harrison herself tells

us, chiefly to the conviction that the Olympians were not only non-primitive but positively in a sense non-religious; but that, on the other hand, the cultus of Dionysus and of Orpheus were essentially religious. Under the influence of Bergson and Durkheim she came to feel first, that the mystery-god and the Olympian expressed, restrictively, the one *durée*, life, and the other the action of conscious intelligence which reflects on and analyzes life; and second, that among primitive peoples religion represents collective feeling and collective thinking rather than the thought of the individual. The starting-point of the book is the fragmentary hymn which was discovered a few years ago by the English excavators at Palaikastro in Crete. The hymn begins with an invocation to " Mightiest Kouros, Kronian," coming at the head of his Daimones to join in dance and song; it then continues apparently with an etiological myth, and concludes with the benefits conferred—fertility, prosperity, and the rule of Dike and Themis. This Kouros of the hymn Miss Harrison identifies with Zeus, Dionysus, Zagreus. She would attribute his origin to the social action of the Kouretes, who represent a tribal group whose unity the Kouros reflects—a group into which youths were received by initiation rites, by a New-Birth, a *dromenon*. This *dromenon* itself is something *re-done* or *pre-done* with magical intent; the dithyramb being a *dromenon* of the New-Birth. The god derives his existence from the collective enthusiasm of the Kouretes, Bacchoi, or whatever the social unit may be called. This furnishes the kernel of the whole book. Miss Harrison then proceeds to discuss man's reaction toward the universe, in which he sees strange powers which he tries to control through magic or to shun through *tabu*. The Omophagia is regarded as an example of the essence of magic; this consideration requires a definition of sacrament and sacrifice. The chapter on the dithyramb and the spring festival, whose purpose was to secure the awakening and fertility of the world, leads to a chapter on the origin of the Olympic Games contributed by Mr. Cornford. These, according to the writer, arose from an annual race of the Kouretes, the victor becoming the Eniautos-Daimon, the good-luck of the year, who is, however, absorbed by the hero. Miss Harrison then resumes her discussion and in three chapters carries us from the daimon and hero through the transition stage represented by Herakles and Apollo, to the highly individualized Olympians. Finally Themis is shown to be the collective conscience of the neutral, not the conventional, social group; she is "herd-instinct, the social sanction," to quote Miss Harrison's own expression. "The emphasis and representation of this collective conscience, this social imperative," to her mind, constitute religion. "Themis is not religion but she is the stuff of which religious representations are made" (p. 485).

The reviewer naturally has no desire to treat this book lightly, or to attempt to obscure its real value by massing objections against it. As he

has said above, the work is full of learning and insight. If it sometimes seems to take the reader far afield and to be expanded by the consideration of matters only remotely connected, the treatment is always interesting and persuasive. Indeed one must be on his guard lest he be carried along against his own judgment. There is in it much matter for reflection, much that is illuminating. Miss Harrison deserves well of her fellow-students of religion for attempting to apply Durkheim's social psychology to the problems of Greek religion, even if they are forced to entertain doubts as to many of the results she has obtained. She is right in emphasizing the fact that the Olympians are born of literature and art, of reflection and analysis, and in making clear the difference between them and the products of the natural social group. Yet the reviewer must say in all frankness that the work seems to him to exhibit serious defects both in principle and in detail, a few of which he will now mention.

In the first place there is here, implicitly at least, that confusion between the origins and the nature of the developed religion which was mentioned above. If we allow that Themis was originally the "herd-instinct" made objective, it does not necessarily follow that the source of her being determined her nature in the developed period of Greek religion. Too many influences have been operative to admit of that. Indeed no developed god or religious institution ever came from any single source. The origins are manifold, and there is grave danger that the scholar shall overestimate some one source or a few sources which he sees, and so distort the truth. We must also return to the doubt whether the ceremony of the Second-Birth among the Akikúyu of British East Africa or among the Hindus are quite such illuminating parallels to Greek customs as Miss Harrison would make them. Are the Intichiuna ceremonies of Central Australia really analogous to the rite of the revocation of ghosts at the Anthesteria? Should one not look for phenomena somewhat less remote from the Hellenic world? Again is it right to make so much of Cretan influence as Miss Harrison and others frequently do? Good fortune has revealed to us much of the Minoan civilization, but no man can tell what the next decade may show us in Asia Minor or even in Northern Greece. The lessons of the last forty years since Schliemann began at Troy should not be wholly lost, but should rather make us cautious. That Crete influenced Greece profoundly no one would deny, but there is as yet no warrant for regarding the land of Minos as the chief source of post-Dorian civilization.

When we come to some objections to details we must note that there is no sure proof that there ever was a Minoan god corresponding to the Dionysus of later times. There may have been, but there is no certain evidence of his existence. Surely a hymn which, in its present form, dates from the third century of our era is no warrant for a period at least fifteen hundred years earlier, even if it contain the primitive elements which the verses from

Palaikastro certainly do. The hymn itself is in three fragments. One of the breaks comes after the words:

Ἐνθα γὰρ σέ, παᾶδ' ἄμβροτον,  
 ἄσπιδ[ηφόροι τροφήες]  
 παρ' Ἑᾶς λαβόντες πόδα  
 κ[ρούοντες ἀπέκρυσαν].

This certainly is the beginning of the familiar story of the protection of the infant Zeus by the Kouretes. But when Miss Harrison goes on to say that to the cardinal features of the story belong the hiding, killing, and dismemberment of the child, who then is to be brought to life again, she is stating something which cannot be proved, and the arbitrary equation Kouros = Zeus, or Dionysus, or Zagreus, combined with the doctrine of expurgation, will not convince all readers.

The sarcophagus from Hagia Triada is interpreted with a confidence as to the relation of the scenes depicted and their details that is somewhat startling. Miss Harrison knows why the bull gives up his blood: it is that the people may have new *mana*, new μένος. The sequel of the killing she sees on the other side, in the scene in which a woman is pouring something into a crater between two upright double axes; this something, we are told, is the blood of the bull who is dying on the opposite side. The something poured may be blood, but Miss Harrison's interpretation is purely subjective, as is much else that she says about the scene. What warrant have we for believing that the two sides represent scenes related in any such way as that presented by Miss Harrison? None whatever. To multiply objections of this sort would be easy, although ungracious.

One thing more, however, should be mentioned. In a number of places in the text Miss Harrison employs Professor Gilbert Murray's beautiful English versions, relegating the Greek to the footnotes. But Mr. Murray's versions, for all their beauty, often incorporate ideas which are not found in the original so that the effect is somewhat misleading. For example (p. 33):

When from out the fire immortal,  
 To himself his God did take him,  
 To his own flesh, and bespake him:  
 "Enter now life's second portal,  
 Motherless Mystery; lo, I break  
 Mine own body for thy sake,  
 Thou of the Twofold Door, and seal thee  
 Mine, O Bromios"—thus he spake—  
 "And to this thy land reveal thee."

Eurip. *Bacchae* 518 ff.:

ὅτε μηρῷ πορὸς ἐξ ἀ-  
 θανάτου Ζεὺς ὁ τεκὼν ἦρ-  
 πασέ νιν τάδ' ἀναβόαςας.

ἴθι, Διθύραμβ', ἐμὴν ἄρ-  
 σενα τάνδε βᾶθι νηδύν·  
 ἀναφαίνω σε τόδ', ὦ Βάκ-  
 χιε, Θήβαις ὀνομάζειν.

Or again (p. 133), where the expansion is less misleading:

O feet of a fawn to the greenwood fled,  
 Alone in the grass and the loveliness.

*Bacchae* 866:

ὥς νεβρὸς χλοεραῖς ἐμπαί-  
 ζουσα λείμακος ἡδοναῖς.

Compare again pp. 38-41.

To the chapter on "Daimon and Hero" Professor Murray adds an excursus on "Ritual Forms Preserved in Greek Tragedy," in which he treats matters recently handled by him in part in public lectures in this country.

It is unfortunate that a book which contains so much of vital interest to students of Greek civilization should continually make the reader pause and doubt its processes and its conclusions.

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*The Origin of Tragedy with Special Reference to the Greek Tragedians.*

By WILLIAM RIDGEWAY. Cambridge University Press, 1910.

Pp. 228. \$2. 25.

In this book Mr. Ridgeway rejects the generally accepted view which associates the origin of Greek tragedy with the worship of Dionysus. He refuses to believe that anything so solemn as the tragic drama could have had its genesis in what he calls, ignoring the serious side of the Dionysiac faith, the orgies of an unclean and licentious ritual. He seems to accept the view of Aristotle and others that it developed from the dithyrambic chorus, but he denies that the dithyramb had anything more than an accidental connection with Dionysus. Indeed, the dithyramb existed in Greece long before the immigration of the Thracian wine-god. It was originally, he appears to think, a ritualistic "mimetic" chorus which was sung at the tombs of local heroes to honor and propitiate the dead, like the "tragic choruses" with which, according to Herodotus, the Sicyonians celebrated the "sufferings" of the hero Adrastus. Such choruses came to be called "tragic," not because a goat was the prize nor because the singers impersonated the goat-like followers of Dionysus (the Satyrs, by the way, were not goat-like but horse-like according to Mr. Ridgeway), but simply because they wore goat skins—a costume which had only a traditional significance for it was merely a survival from the primitive time when goat skins formed the dress of all people.

At first the "tragic" performances were local and ritualistic. They were given only at the tomb. The first great innovation which changed this ritualistic "mummery" into something like dramatic art was made by